

NCMA's Certification Program

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Certification Trends

- Certification 'Industry' growing in importance
- Began in early '90's with Drake & Novell partnership for computer-based testing
- Concurrent rise in accrediting agencies
 - National Commission on Certifying Agencies (NCCA)
 - ISO/IEC standard 17024
- Government recognition of certifications
 - At Veterans' Administration where certifications recognized for reimbursement (P.L. 106-419)
 - At Air Force
 - Agencies now allowed discretion to pay for certifications



Future of Certification

- Professional Staff -knowledge of testing/evaluation
- Exams directly traceable to professional practice or product usage
- Accredited certifications will have published basis
 - Body of Knowledge for profession
 - Grounded in accepted practices
 - Evaluation of test with respect to practice
 - Continuous monitoring of changes in profession
- Public demand for excellence and accountability will force out poor performers
- Certifications - very important part of any profession - demonstrate accountability to public



Certification provides advantages on both sides of the handshake

- **William Vanderbilt** (Chief

Technology Officer and Dir.
Of Training, Beacon Institute for
Learning, FL)



- Certifications provide employers with an evaluation of their employees' competency, and demonstrate to clients that the entity has expertise within a particular discipline.
- Certifications provide employees with evaluation of their competencies and a reason for higher compensation/increased responsibility.



A New Core Competency

“There are a whole emerging set of competencies coming out of outsourcing – the management of partners.”

Bruce Claflin, CEO 3Com

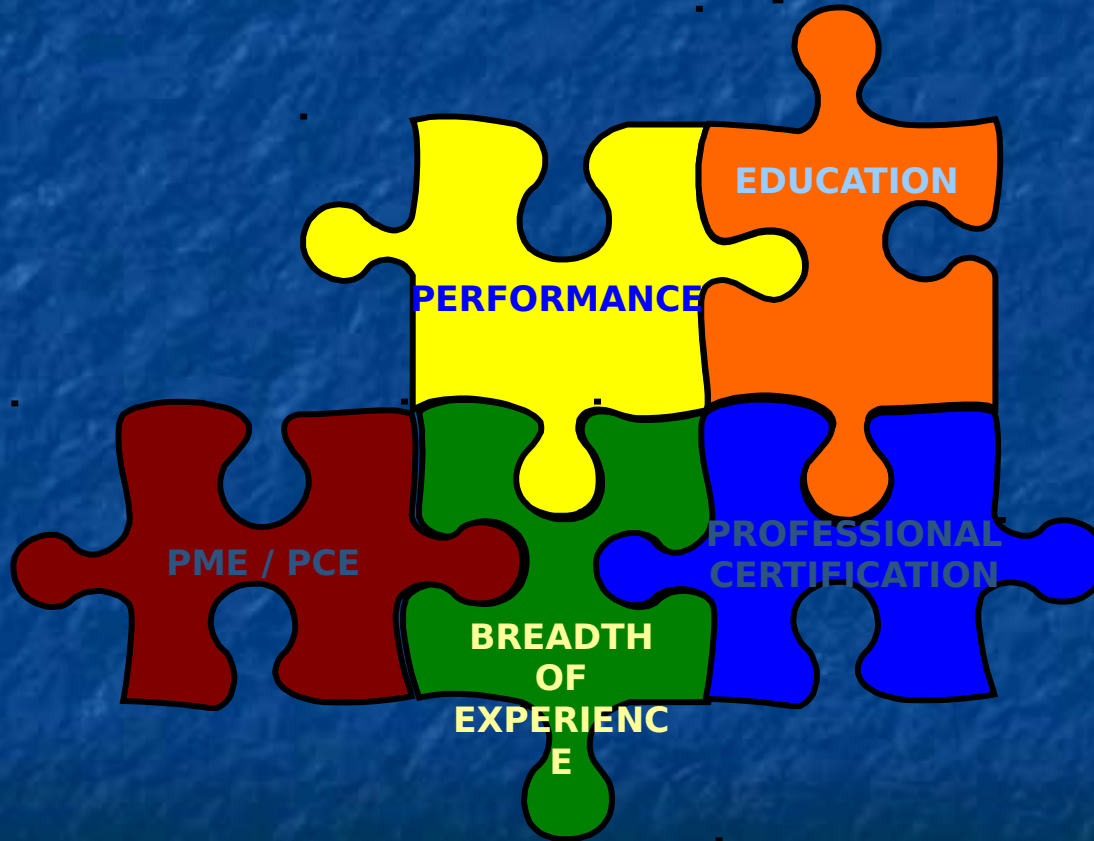
- Success now becomes dependent upon how well an organization “connects core competencies” How well it selects, integrates and manages its partners.

This core organizational competency is contract management.

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Elements of Contracting Career Development



Successful Leadership Skills

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Business Acumen
- Results Driven
- Building Coalitions



Characteristics of CM Leaders

IN THE PAST

- Contract Focus/Rules Based
- Conservative/Established Strategies
- Risk Averse
- Manage Workforce
- Stove-piped career progression

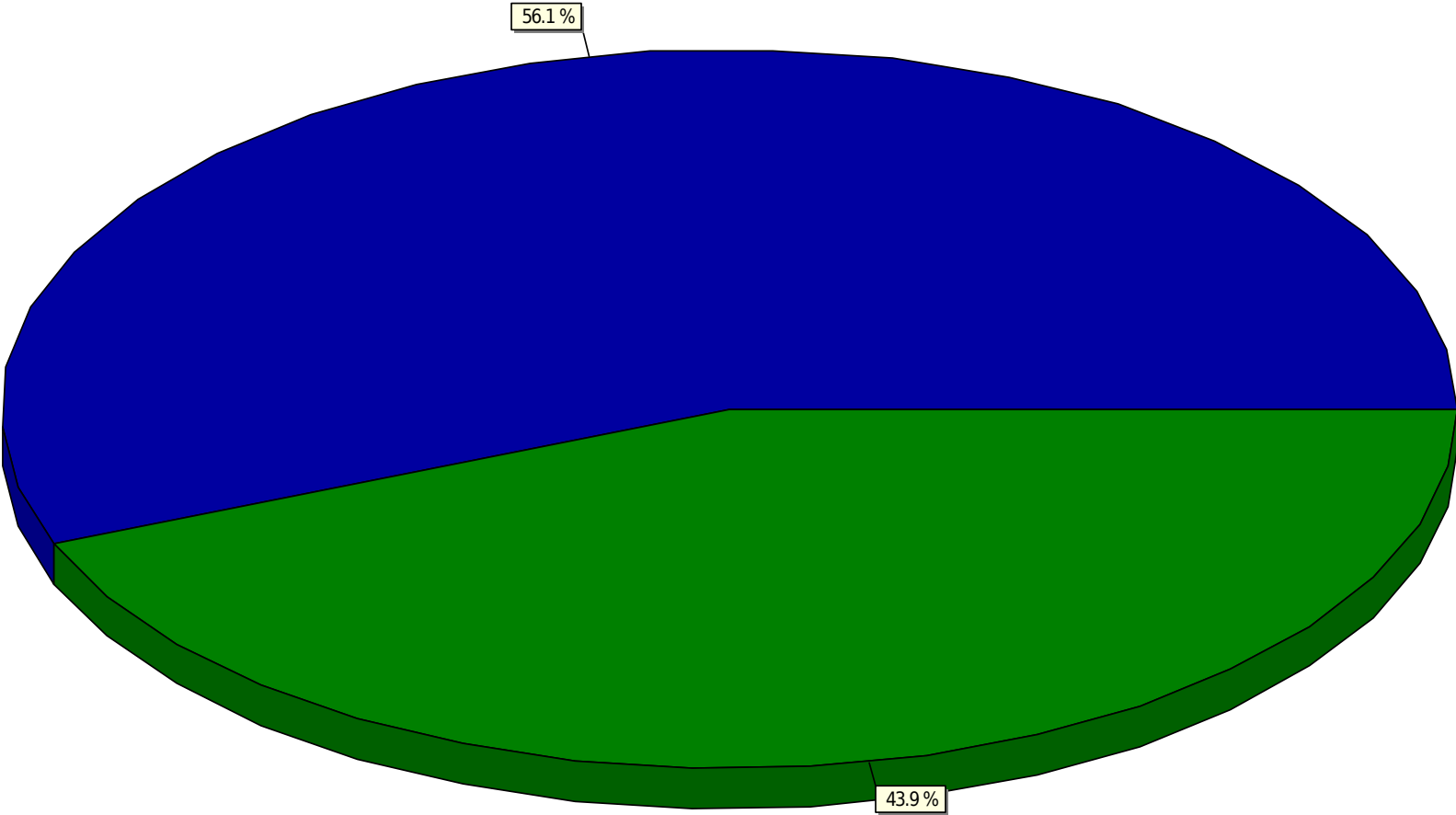
NOW

- Strategic Business focus
- Creative Solutions and Innovation
- Thoughtful Risk Taking
- Lead and Mentor
- Functional Depth with Acquisition Breadth



Are you male or female?

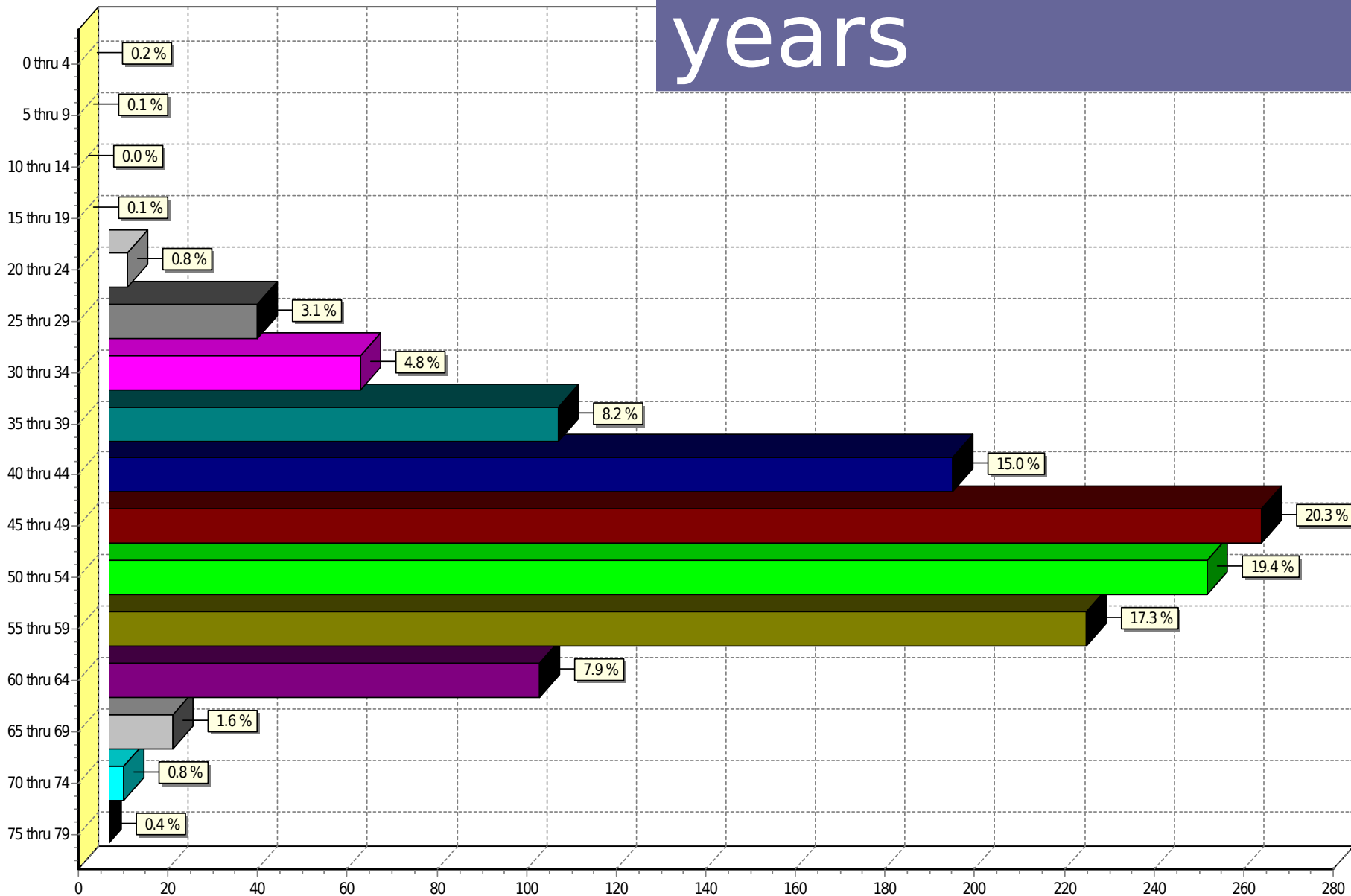
Mean = Male (1.44)



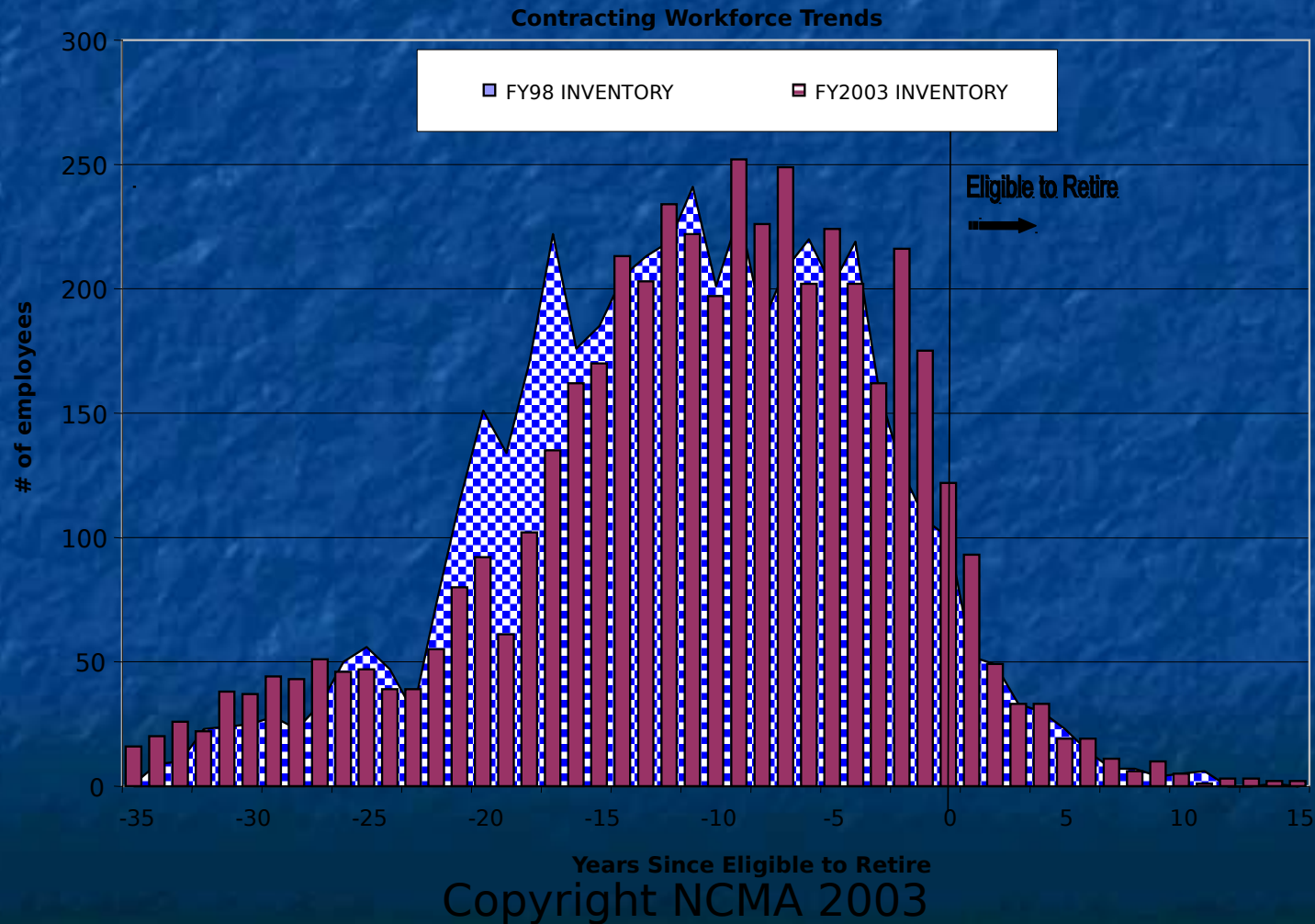
How old are you?

Mean = 48.19
Min = 1.00, Max = 79.00
Median = 49.00

Age = 48.2 years



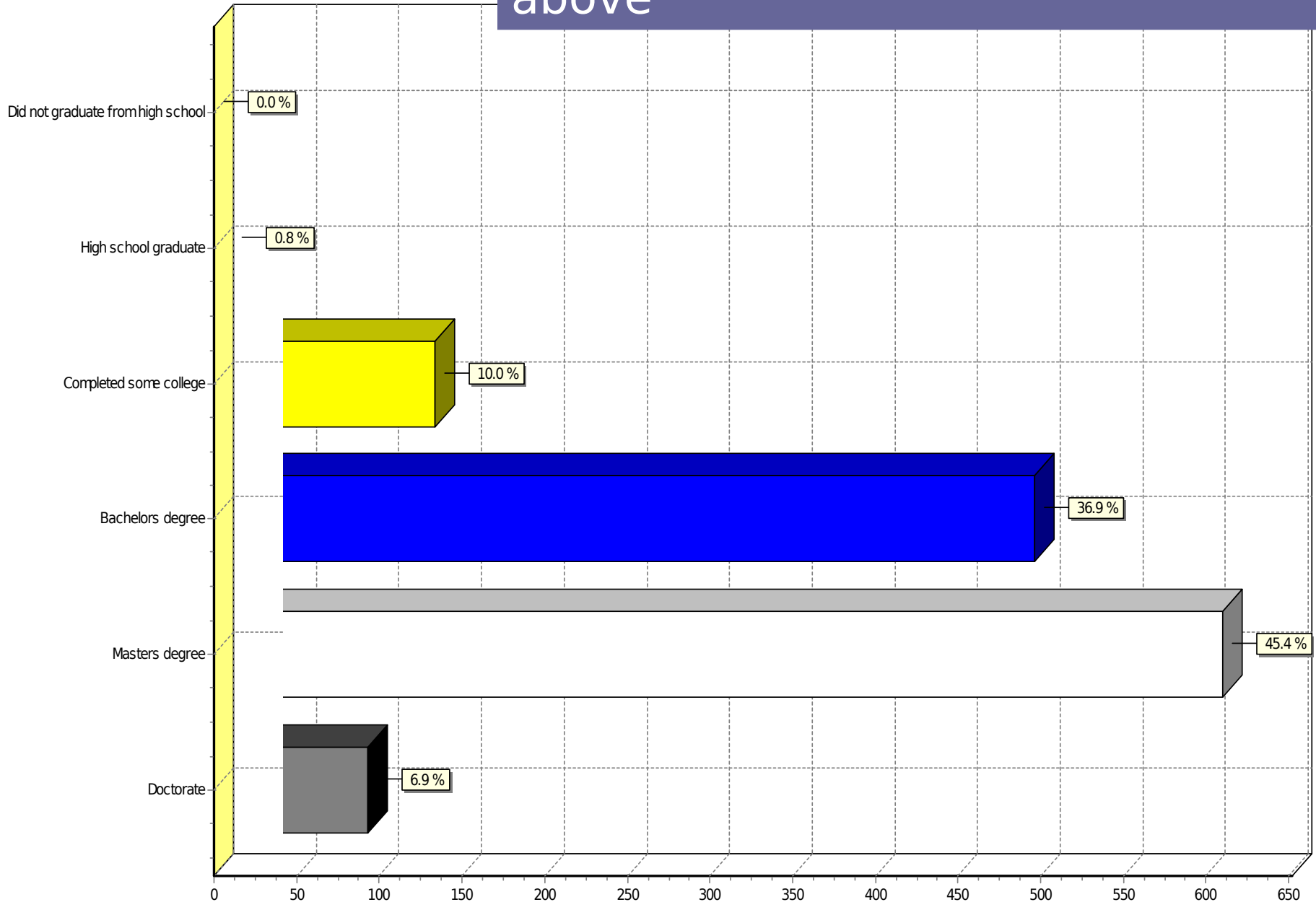
Total 1102 Workforce Eligible to Retire



What is the highest level of education you have attained to date?

Mean = Bachelors degree (4.48)

Education: 52% hold Masters or above



6 Most Import Trends & Issues Affecting Contracts, Procurement and Acquisition

1. Changing role of the contracting workforce	73.1%
2. Best contracting practices	71.8%
3. Increased e-commerce, e-business, and e-procurement	65.9%
4. Career development issues	62.5%
5. Corporate governance and standards of conduct	61.5%
6. Contracting as a core organizational competency	60.0%



5 Issues That Most Affect Job Performance, Job Satisfaction, or Career Advancement

1. My role is not viewed as important or 'strategic' by management.	26.0%
2. I have too much work.	24.2%
3. My job does not provide advancement opportunity.	21.4%
4. Management has unrealistic expectations of my work (quality, capacity, timeliness).	21.3%
5. My customers have unreasonable expectations of my performance.	17.4%



% of respondents rating this issue as greatly affecting them.

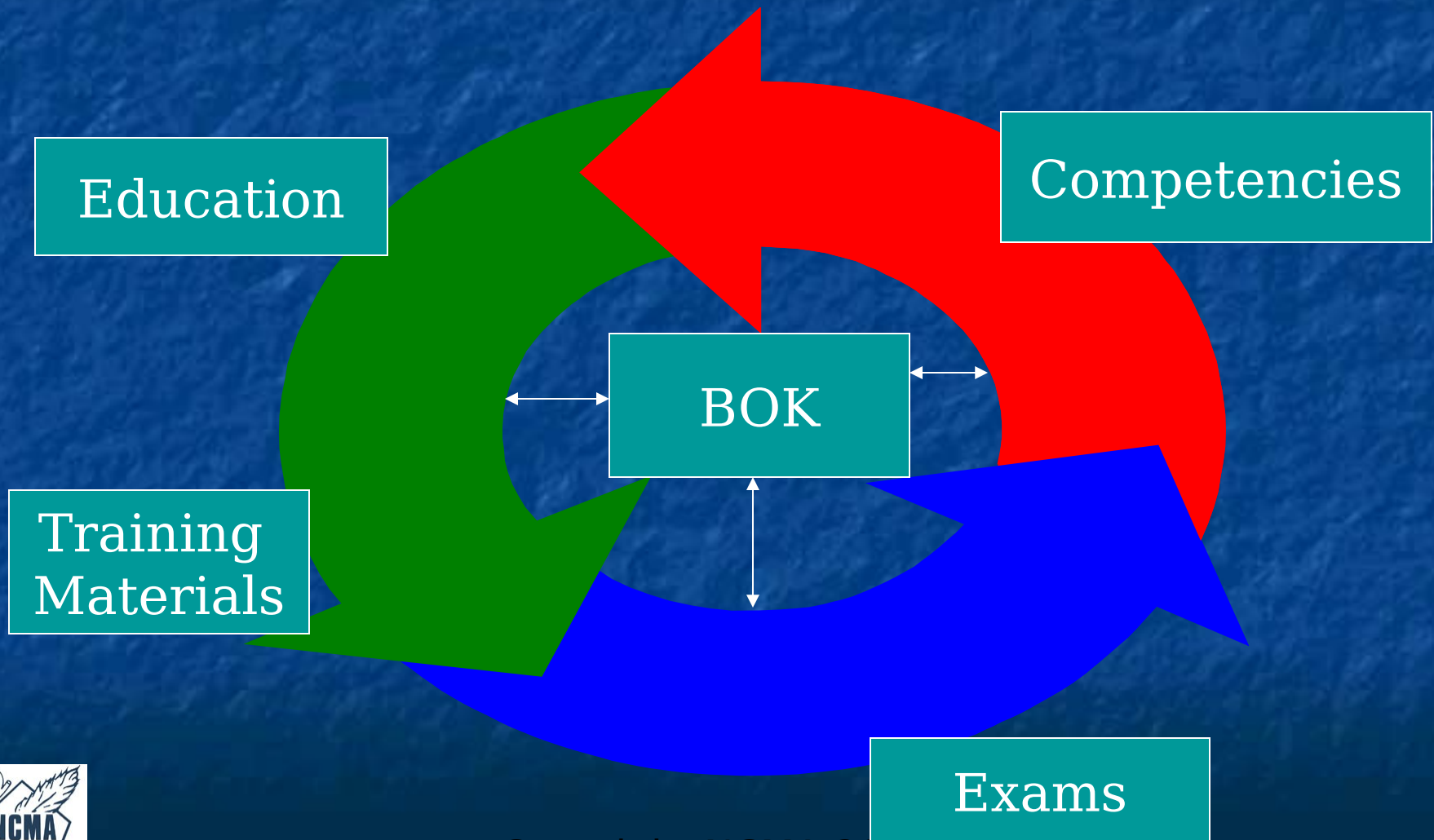
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5 Issues That Least Affect Job Performance, Job Satisfaction, or Career Advancement

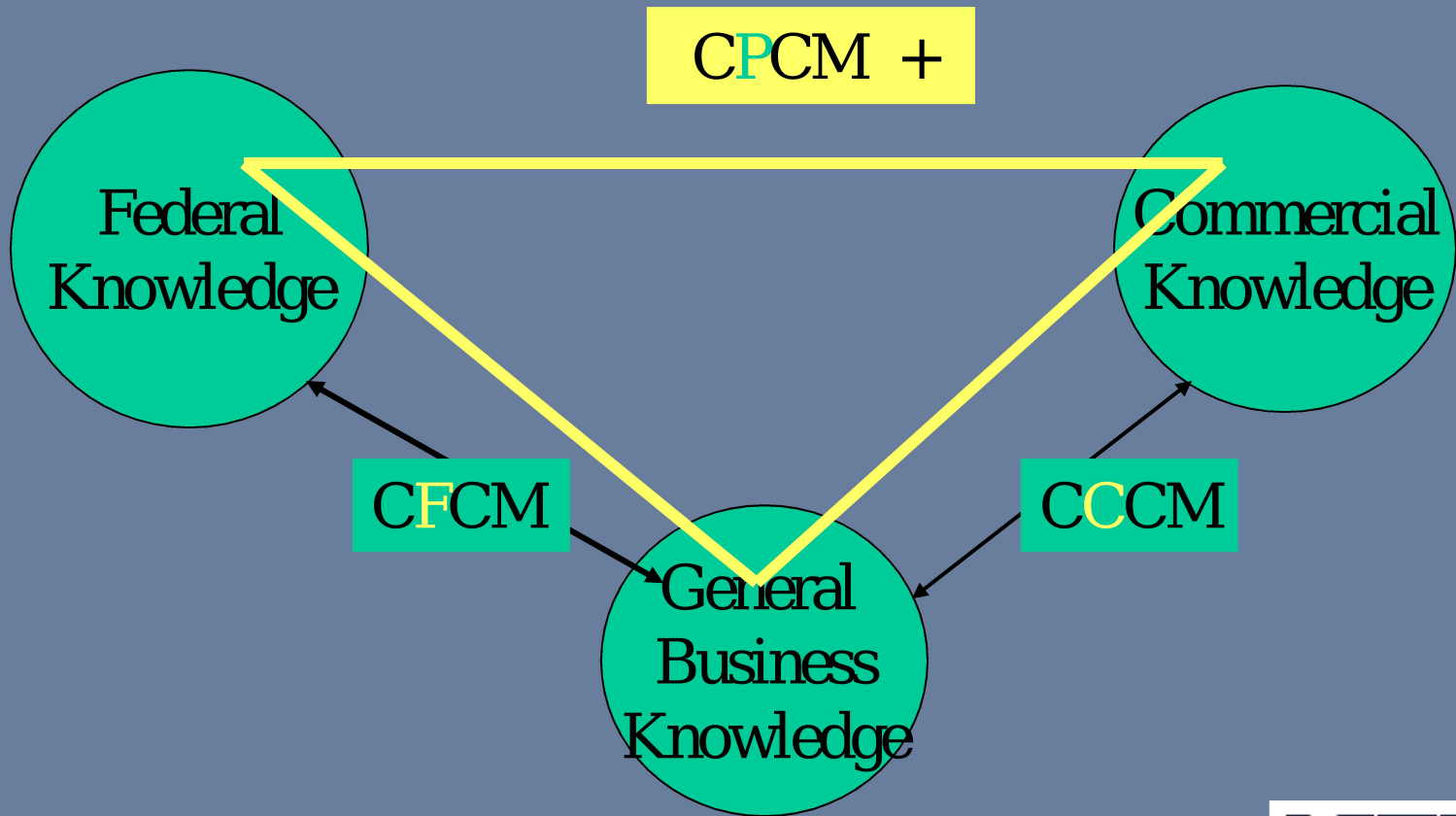
1. My skills are inadequate to meet the demands of my job.	69.6%
2. I can't find a new job.	60.9%
3. My job is not challenging enough.	59.2%
4. I have inadequate tools, equipment, or software necessary to do my job.	51.9%



Basic Program Architecture



Certification Program



Topics for Federal Knowledge Module

- FAR
- Competition and Contract Acquisition Planning
- Contracting Methods and Contract Types
- Socioeconomic Programs
- General Contracting Requirements
- Contract Management
- Ethics in the government arena
- Customer service: who is the customer?



Topics for Gen. Business Knowledge Module

- Financial Analysis
- Contract Administration
- Budgeting/Analysis
- Business Management
- Negotiation
- Disputes Resolution
- Electronic Commerce
- Patents/Trademarks/Intellectual Property
- Legal/Ethical Issues



Topics for Commercial Knowledge Module

- Uniform Commercial Code
- International Trade & Commerce
- GAAP
- SEC
- Customer Service
- Patents/Trademarks/Intellectual Property
- Legal/Ethical Issues
- E-business/B2B
- Relationship Building/Partnerships



Examination process

- No particular order
- Schedule both exams for CFCM or CCCM on same day
- NCMA does not advise anyone to schedule three exams in one day
- Follow instructions to register at nearby Thomson Prometric Center
- Bring ID with picture and name as registered
- Call 1-800-295-5783 if you encounter problems with delivery



Examination Process (Cont.)

- Instant grading (Post-Beta)
- Grade report – use as guide for further study
- Instant designation
- NCMA will order and send certificate and pin
- NCMA will send letters of achievement (with copy to designee) to as many as three people
- NCMA will list names in CM Magazine



What do WE (you & me) get from this?

- More certified Contracts Managers
- More recognition of CM importance
- More influence on process
- More input into process
- More SUCCESS
- Everybody WINS



Questions? Anyone?



For more information



- **Contact**

- Louise Wehrle, Ph.D.

- Director of Professional Development

- wehrle@ncmahq.org or
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- 800-344-8096, X 437



Hints on taking M/C exams

- Read the question carefully– answer it **as is**
- Use e-scratch paper to record notes to self
- Answer the easy questions first
- Eliminate the obvious wrong answers
- Make educated guesses



M/C Testing Strategies

Multiple choice questions usually comprise a phrase (stem) followed by three to five options (distractors)

- **Test strategies:**

- Read the directions carefully
- Know if each question has one or more correct option
- Know if you are penalized for guessing

- Answer easy questions first

- Use e-Scratch paper function for 'Notes to Self'

- **Answering options**

- **Improve your odds, think critically**
- **Cover the options, read the stem, and try to answer**
Select the option that most closely matches your answer
- **Read the stem with each option**
Treat each option as a true-false question, and choose the "most true"



M/C Testing Strategies (Cont.)

Strategies for difficult questions

Eliminate options you know to be incorrect

- **Eliminate options that grammatically don't fit with the stem**
- **Eliminate options that are totally unfamiliar to you**
- **Question options that contain negative or absolute words.**
Try substituting a qualified term for the absolute one, like *frequently* for *always*; or *typical* for *every* to see if you can eliminate it
- **Number answers:** Toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers
- **"Look alike options"**
probably one is correct; choose the best but eliminate choices that mean basically the same thing, and thus cancel each other out
- **Echo options:** If two options are opposite each other, chances are one of them is correct
- **Favor options that contain qualifiers**
The result is longer, more inclusive items that better fill the role of the answer
- **If two alternatives seem correct,** compare them for differences, then refer to the stem to find your best answer



M/C Testing Strategies (cont.)

Guessing

- **Always guess when there is no penalty** for guessing or you can eliminate options
- **Don't guess if you are penalized** for guessing and if you have no basis for your choice
- **Don't change your answers** unless you are sure of the correction
- **Use hints from questions you know** to answer questions you do not.



Managing Time

1. There's always time for what you do first.
2. The sooner you face your fears, the less time you'll waste.
3. Traditional time management is far too limited for today's complex, holistic world.
4. Perfectionism is one of the chief blocks to peak performance.
5. The stronger your sense of self-worth, the better use you'll make of your time.
6. Never underestimate the power of momentum.
7. You can't possibly keep up with all the latest information, and you'd probably be better off to stop trying.
8. Having a vision and a plan are vital, but just as vital are the willingness and ability to revamp or scrap them both without regret.
9. The more fun you have, the more you can get done.
10. The busier you are, the more important it is to invest time in managing your time.

(from "Managing Time: 10 Things Everyone Needs to Know," The Buffalo News, July 3, 1996, Wednesday, City Edition, Lifestyles, at p. 1C. ©1996 Ann Reeves)



MURDER: A Study System

Mood: Set a positive mood to study in an appropriate time and environment.

Understand: Mark information you don't understand; keep focus on understanding one unit or a manageable group of exercises.

Recall: After studying a unit, stop and put what you have learned into your own words.

Digest: Go back to what you did not understand and reconsider the information. Seek help if you need to.

Expand: Ask three kinds of questions concerning the studied material:

- If I could speak to the author, what questions would I ask or what criticism would I offer?
- How could I apply this material to other topics or other information I've learned?
- How could I make this information interesting and understandable to other participants?

Review: Go over the material you've covered.
Apply the strategies that helped you understand and/or retain information.

*Adapted by Bob Nelson from **The Complete Problem Solver** by John R. Hayes., Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers*

